

# Memo

To: Coastal Fisheries Advisory Committee

From: Fisheries Service

Date: August 18, 2010

Re: Striped Bass Commercial Quota Addendum Public Comment

---

## **Background**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board has asked the ASMFC staff to prepare a memo outlining options for increasing the coastal commercial quota. Since the mid-1990s, commercial harvest has been relatively constant, while recreational harvest has increased. The ASMFC Technical Committee reviewed the options, and while projections indicate that catch may decline in the next few years, any increase to the coastal portion of the commercial quota would not result in overfishing or an overfished status.

## **Timeline**

ASMFC staff will accept public comment will be accepted until October 1, 2010. The next ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board meeting is in November 2010, and the Board will consider final approval of the options and the addendum at that meeting.

## **Coastal Comment to Date**

Fisheries Service staff attended the ASMFC Public Comment meeting in June 2010. Comment heard at that meeting was formally collected, and will be reviewed by the Board. However, Fisheries Service provided a summary of the comments heard to Tom O'Connell. Comments were centered on several points. For the purpose of this document, not all comments heard are included, but representative comments heard are included.

- Areas of uncertainty about the health of the stock, including menhaden availability and mycobacteriosis:
  - “Is the stock really healthy? Time and attention needs to be paid to increase the availability of menhaden in the Chesapeake. The decline in sea trout and weakfish may also be a contributing factor.”

- “Concern is about health of the stock, not anti-commercial industry.”
  - “Leave the regulations alone for a few years, fix the poaching problems in Maryland and Virginia, put more controls on menhaden, get a handle on the bacteria in the Bay, and determine if there are any effects from the oil spill. Wait 2-3 years to evaluate these issues then re-evaluate increase.”
  - “We don’t know what the impact of the oil spill will be on mid-Atlantic fisheries.”
- Indications that the stock is decreasing such as:
    - “We have heard that some states that used to see striped bass aren’t seeing many in the past few years.”
    - “The last few years have been below average for young of the year striped bass.”
  - Need better control of current allocation/harvest estimate for both commercial and recreational
    - “Have to register hunted animals, wouldn’t mind same for recreational fishermen.”
    - “Effort is increasing both for recreational and commercial, problem that there’s no payback for recreational overages.”
    - “Need to increase enforcement on recreational fishermen.”
    - “Not fair recreational has no hard quota, commercial is very limited.”
    - “Would like to see poaching reduced.”

### **Additional Comments**

If there are comments in addition to those here that Fisheries Service should be aware of, please bring them to the meeting August 24, 2010. There will be a ***brief*** period (5-10 minutes) on the agenda for discussion.